

#### Members

Sen. Robert Jackman, Chair  
Sen. Thomas Weatherwax  
Sen. Connie Sipes  
Sen. Billie Breaux  
Rep. Rich McClain  
Rep. William Ruppel  
Rep. Greg Porter  
Rep. Dennie Oxley



#### LSA Staff:

Bernadette Bartlett, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee  
Irma Reinumagi, Attorney for the Committee  
Jeanette Adams, Attorney for the Committee

Authority: IC 2-5-21

## EDUCATION MATTERS EVALUATION COMMITTEE

*Legislative Services Agency  
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789  
Tel: (317) 232-9588 Fax: (317) 232-2554*

### MEETING MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

**Meeting Date:** October 7, 1999  
**Meeting Time:** 10:00 A.M.  
**Meeting Place:** State House, 200 W. Washington St.,  
Room 233  
**Meeting City:** Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Meeting Number:** 3

**Members Present:** Sen. Robert Jackman, Chair; Sen. Thomas Weatherwax; Sen. Connie Sipes; Rep. William Ruppel; Rep. Greg Porter.

**Members Absent:** Sen. Billie Breaux; Rep. Rich McClain; Rep. Dennie Oxley.

#### **Opening Remarks by the Chair**

Senator Robert Jackman, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order and asked that Legislative Services Agency begin by giving its presentation on other states and high stakes assessment (Exhibit 1). After the presentation, Senator Weatherwax remarked that the information contained within the presentation is important and that Indiana should continue to look at other states and their policies.

#### **Testimony**

Robert Marra, Director of Special Education Programs, Department of Education.

Mr. Marra recommended that Legislative Services Agency continue its study on the impact of the ISTEP+ GQE, but to focus on all students with disabilities. The Chair indicated that it would be more appropriate that the Department of Education continue to look at this issue, but that Legislative Services Agency could assist with the analysis of any data collected.

Donna Olsen, Executive Director, Indiana Parent Information Network.

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<sup>1</sup>Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Ms. Olsen began by stating that student assessment facilitates good communication between schools and stakeholders. Student assessment can be a good indicator of how well our schools are doing.

She is concerned that schools are not properly informed regarding assessment and students with disabilities. When policy changes are implemented, schools are usually the last to know. She would like to continue working with the Department of Education in order to inform schools on how to administer state assessments to students with special needs.

Paula Guzzo, Regional Program Specialist, Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs.

Ms. Guzzo spoke for Richard Burden (Executive Director of the Resource Center) in his absence. Ms. Guzzo provided copies of her written testimony to the Committee (Exhibit 2).

Linda Hankins, Parent.

Ms. Hankins provided copies of her written testimony to the Committee (Exhibit 3).

Roger Thornton, Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents.

Mr. Thornton began his testimony by indicating that the “real issue” of ISTEP+ is the validity of the test. High vocational abilities and skills should be taken into consideration when assessing students, and Indiana’s Alternate Assessment might be a means through which to accomplish this. Mr. Thornton spoke about the difficult job that school corporations have in administering ISTEP+ when rules change each year. School corporations are not adequately informed of changes that affect their administration of ISTEP+.

Schools need to get ISTEP+ scores back sooner in order to gauge how best to help students improve academically, and school corporations need funding for summer special education programs.

Gail Zeheralis, Indiana State Teachers Association.

Ms. Zeheralis stated that she concurred with Mr. Thornton’s testimony. She reiterated that assessment scores need to be provided earlier in the process and that fully funded remediation is necessary.

Rick Santangelo, President, MSD Warren Township Special Education Council.

Mr. Santangelo provided copies of his written testimony to the Committee (Exhibit 4).

Niles Daggy, Special Education Director, MSD Warren Township.

Mr. Daggy began his testimony by encouraging the Committee to look at ISTEP+ in consideration of students at lower ability ranges. He stated that “one test does not fit all,” and that any valid assessment should be tied closely to a student’s instructional curriculum.

In response to a question from Senator Sipes, Mr. Daggy informed the Committee that a school building will typically “stop everything” in order to administer ISTEP+. He added that from a personnel standpoint, the administration of ISTEP+ can be very problematic.

ISTEP+ is a cross between an old-fashioned achievement test and an IQ test. In contrast to an assessment tied specifically to a student’s curriculum, he suggested that ISTEP+ causes high

achieving as well as low achieving students to “fall off the end.” Indiana would benefit from a move toward year-end subject assessments. Such assessments allow the student to be evaluated on what he/she has been taught, and would effectively demonstrate what the student has learned.

### **Closing Remarks by the Chair**

The Chair set the next meeting of the Committee to take place on Monday, October 18, 1999 at 10:00 A.M. He stated that no public testimony would be taken and that a Committee discussion would take place in order to decide prospective legislative action. There being no further discussion, the Chair adjourned the meeting shortly after noon.